

Passing of Landmark: Old Clatsop Home Razed for Lumber

**Tower of West House Near Seaside
Long Known to Travelers on Coast;
Ancient Timbers to Be Used Again**

BY RUBY KELLEY
Free Lance Writer

WRECKING of one of the oldest landmarks in Oregon, one of Clatsop county's pioneer homes, was undertaken recently by Harley Bennett and William G. Ramsey, who purchased the place and expect to build homes for themselves with the salvaged lumber.

The famous old house, situated eight miles north of Seaside on highway 101, was built by the noted pioneer, Josiah West, in 1890, consisted of 2½ stories, and a tower, and contained 14 rooms. Its razing calls to mind interesting history and the colorful career of its builder.

In 1846 lines of demarkation between British and American land in the Northwest were established, and in 1850 donation land claims were surveyed. In the meantime, squatters settled much of the land.

Harriett Kimbell, later Mrs. John Jewett, whose first husband was killed in the Whitman massacre, was taken captive by the Indians and held for a time at the Whitman Mission. Later, Mrs. Kimbell, and children, met John Jewett and children at a social affair in Linnton, and soon after Mrs. Kimbell became Mrs. John Jewett. With 20-dollar gold pieces she had hidden in her belt when captured by the Indians, Mrs. Jewett purchased squatters' rights to a large tract of land on what is now known as Clatsop Plains. This tract later became the Harriett and John Jewett donation land claim. The patent for the land claim was signed by Andrew Johnson, then president of the United States. This claim contained 2000 acres and extended from Cullaby lake on the east to the Pacific ocean on the west, and a mile and a half north and south.

John and Harriett Jewett later sold the property to their sons, Byron Kimbell and Thomas Jewett, who in turn sold it to Josiah West in 1872, for the sum of \$3000. West was advised against the purchase of this land as it was said to be worn out by the squatters to such an extent that it "wouldn't even sprout a pea."

West was born in New York in 1831 and came west on horseback in 1852. Mrs. West, formerly Lamira Harrison, came west in 1846 in a covered wagon via the Barlow trail, when two years of age. They were married in Washington county, and after farming for a time in Washington, near Spokane, they came to Clatsop Plains, in 1873.

SHIP:

**Beached Conveniently
To Furnish Foundation**

In a house situated on the site of the one built by West, six of their nine children were born. When West decided to build in 1890, a ship, the Carnesmoore, was beached. It was loaded with barrels of cement which had hardened. These West used as foundation blocks. They were set upon mud sills sunk five or six feet in the ground, then more sills were placed upon the barrels, to form a strong foundation for the house, which West said, would take an acre and a half with it if it was blown over in a sou'wester. The sills were hand-hewn of redwood and cedar, and square nails were used in the structure. The tower rose 20 feet above the main structure.

The West farm was said to

be "a bee hive of industry the chief occupation being dairying. At one time a crew of nine men milked 90 head of cows by hand. West also owned his own cheese factory, situated near his farm house, raised pure-bred stock and bred fine race horses, and was, according to his daughter, Mrs. J. S. Johnson, "quite a sport in his younger days." He was spoken of by some as "King of Clatsop Plains." He began the practice in the locality of applying fertilizer to the soil so badly worn out by the squatters. At an agricultural meeting held in Astoria, a discussion on the ways of exterminating velvet grass was held, and West, who had been cutting it for hay and pasturing his stock upon it for years, rose and said: "Gentlemen, I have raised nine children on velvet grass."

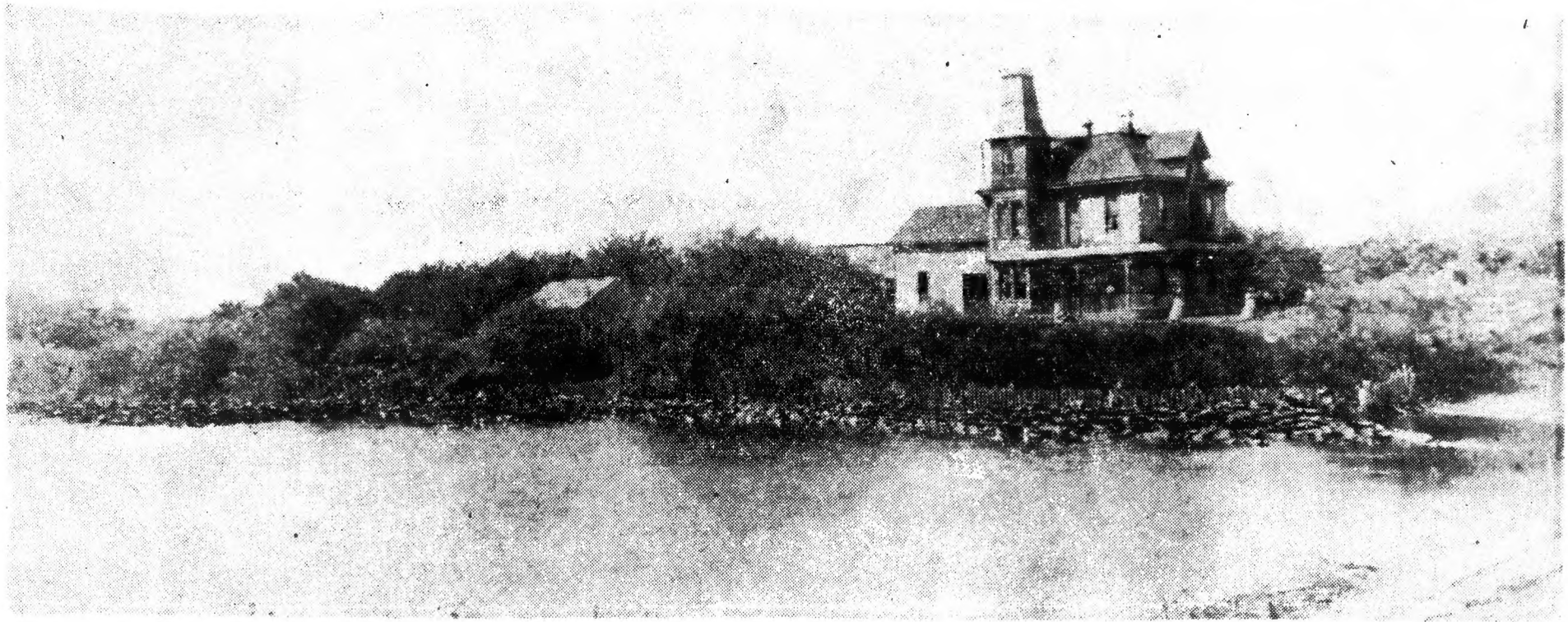
EMPLOYEES:

**Numerous to Keep
Big Farm Operating**

Throughout the year an average of from four to nine hired men were kept on the farm in addition to a number of school boys, with more help during the harvest seasons. West owned a prune orchard near Salem, and each year he took the Clatsop Plains boys to harvest his prunes and see the fair at the same time.

Late in life West planted a cranberry field on his property, and lived to see it produce, later selling it to E. W. Anderson, now one of the leading growers of the area. West donated a railroad right-of-way with the condition that a flag station always be maintained at West Station. The original West estate has been divided and subdivided into many tracts, of various sizes. Many fine homes have been built and are being built on the beautiful West lake, which was a part of the original estate. Several cranberry bogs were planted in this area, and it contains McKnight's poultry farm, one of the largest in Clatsop county. Several dairy farms are situated here, one being owned by Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Johnson, daughter and son-in-law of Josiah West. West hatchery, owned by Mr. and Mrs. F. R. Welch, is doing a thriving business. Recently, a grocery store, a cafe and a garage have been built at an intersection of the old and new highway which eliminates West curve.

The West family included: Mary (Mrs. Chris Peterson), deceased; L. G. West (deceased); W. J. West of Kimberly, Or.; Maud (Mrs. Anson Prescott), Clatsop Plains; Daisy (Mrs. P. Fulkerson), Seaside; Rose (Mrs. J. S. Johnson), Clatsop Plains; T. P. West (deceased); P. H. West, Seaside, and Violet (Mrs. Harold See), Clatsop Plains. Mr. West sent each child to school as long as the child was willing to attend. To each of his 16 grandchildren, he willed a \$1000 educational fund. Two more have been added to the list since his death in 1916.



This towered house, built by Josiah West in 1890, consisted of 2½ stories and contained 14 rooms. Foundation was made of casks of cement from wrecked

ship, the cement having hardened in the casks from its wetting in the sea. Dairymen West was known by some residents as "King of Clatsop Plains."